

1999 State of the Trees Report

City of Chattanooga

1999 was a Year of Changes

It is said that the only thing constant in life is change. The Urban Forestry program has seen change every year since its inception and 1999 was no different. First of all there was concern about the DOS based Tree Manager system. It is not Y2K compliant! The switch-over to a Windows based system has been traumatic to say the least. There have been some departures on the Tree Commission, a departure on the staff, and a change of contractors. We're even changing species in some of our downtown tree wells.

The first and most obvious change for the year 2000 is the new format for our annual report which comes to you courtesy of Microsoft Publisher 98. It provides a stunning array of possibilities to present graphics, photographs, and text. This change will allow for the possibility of streamlining the old report and make it

more interesting and readable. But this changeover will require a change in thinking on the part of this editor as to how to make the best use of this new technology. Let's see if an old dog can learn a new trick! Please let us know what you think of this new format.



The editor for this report is Gene Hyde who is also the City Forester.

Inside this issue:

Service Requests.	2
Tree Planting.	2
The Greening of Chattanooga.	2
Kevin White competes in Tenn. Climbing contest.	3
Forestry staff to expand in 2000.	3
City uses Wolf Tree Co. for service.	3
City Council approves new forestry plan.	4

Staff Happenings

This year brought more changes to the professional staff. Gerald Case held the position of Tree Trimmer until early July at which time he left to pursue a career in private industry. Mr. Case is noted in the tree climbing story on page 3. In November his position was filled by Chris Whitmire, a former crew foreman from Wolf Tree Company.

The Urban Forestry staff is now the following:

Equipment Operator: Billy Blake

Tree Trimmer: Chris Whitmire

Crew Supervisor: Kevin White

Forestry Supervisor: Rick Cooper

City Forester: Gene Hyde

This year the crew rededicated to operating as safely as possible in all of their work. Therefore they are performing monthly sessions on procedures for bucket truck rescue and undergoing weekly "Tailgate Safety" training on a full range of operational safety and related topics.

In December a retired Forest Service employee, Jerry Jeansonne, volunteered to help us understand our new ACRT Tree Manager software program.

Special points of interest: All in 1999 –

Chattanooga was a "Tree City" for the ninth year.

Arbor Day was held at the Tennessee Wildlife Center.

Auburn forester, Trevor Gorman, was our 6th summer intern.

A total of 247 hazard tree requests were solved costing \$63,124.

Uncompleted Service Requests Reduced To Only 31

The total number of service requests received in 1999 was 607. The total number resolved was 616. Only three requests received in 1999 went uncompleted. We continued the trend from several previous years by solving more service requests than we received and we continue to eat into the overall backlog. The 607 request types received in 1999 were:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Brush pickup – 121 | 5. Deadwood – 2 |
| 2. Emergency – 93 | 6. Hazard – 75 |
| 3. Inspect – 41 | 7. Prune – 140 |
| 4. Paving prune – 57 | 8. Remove – 79 |

The cost to solve all 616 completed requests was \$160,576.

All service requests were solved by the in-house crew, Parks crews, Public Works crews, Wolf Tree Company, and private citizens. Our total balance of uncompleted requests for nine years of operating has been reduced to just 31! This may not

seem so impressive, but this editor can recall a time of great frustration and anxiety when the backlog approached 600 and there were scant resources with which to solve the problems.

One way of evaluating our efficiency in 1999 is to judge our completion speed against standard time goals.

			Ideal time to	
	<u># of requests</u>	<u>% of total</u>	<u>complete-days</u>	<u>Actual-days</u>
Emergency	174	28.7	1	less than 1
Priority work	417	68.7	14	20
Routine work	<u>16</u>	<u>2.6</u>	28	14
Totals	607	100.0		

This is a good performance, but look for better in the future as we fine-tune both our goals and delivery systems.

Hundreds of Trees are Planted in 1999!

A total of 16 species were planted in 1999 and are listed below:

1. White Dogwood – 4 each.
2. 'Allee' Elm – 9 each.
3. 'Aristocrat' Pear – 22 each.
4. 'Fastigate' English Oak – 4 each.
5. Okame Cherry – 24 each.
6. Willow Oak – 1 each.
7. Goldenrain Tree – 23 each.
8. Chinese Pistache – 10 each.
9. 'Bowhall' Red Maple – 12 each.

10. 'October Glory' Maple – 4 each.
11. 'Fastigate' European Hornbeam – 2 each.
12. Leland Cypress – 25 each.
13. Seedless Sweetgum – 7 each.
14. Green Ash – 2 each.
15. Shumard Oak – 120 each.
16. Pin Oak – 20 each.

Total: 289

These trees were planted by the Landscape shop of the Parks Department with assistance from three different landscape



The Greening of Chattanooga

There are many ways to measure the quality of life in a city. But there is one measure, however, that is often overlooked. A truly forward-looking city, one with aspirations to greatness and advanced livability, can be measured quantitatively and qualitatively – by the trees within its borders. A city that counts trees as valuable possessions, living things to be cultivated and preserved rather than destroyed, is an oasis of progressive



*Excerpted from an editorial
in the Chattanooga Times
July 25, 1999.*

thought. Chattanooga already understands the value and importance of its trees, but should move rapidly to implement a comprehensive program that would safeguard its leafy sentinels in a broad-based way. "City of Trees" is a sobriquet that any municipality should be proud to claim as its own. Chattanooga's urban forestry program is a fine start toward earning that recognition. It will take much more work and careful planning to make the title a reality.

Kevin White Takes Second Place in Statewide Climbing Competition

On a warm and sunny fall day 14 contestants competed for the title of "State Champion" at the First Annual Tennessee Tree Climbing Jamboree. The event was held at Centennial Park in Nashville on November 13th in conjunction with the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council's annual conference. The competition was broken into four events which simulate real-world work situations encountered on a regular basis by tree trimmers:

- ◆ The Throwline – An event that tests the contestants' ability to throw a weighted throwline through selected tree crotches at various heights and install a climbing line in a limited time.
- ◆ Belayed Speed Climb – A timed event in which the contestants race from the ground to a point 60 feet into a tree using either free-climbing techniques or body thrusting on an installed rope.

- ◆ Secured Footlock - A timed event in which the contestants race up a 40-foot vertical rope using the footlock technique.
- ◆ Work Climb – A timed and judged event in which the contestants must climb throughout the tree and perform various tasks that simulate actual work conditions for tree trimmers.



Kevin White

Mr. White was barely edged out of first place by his close friend, Gerald Case, who is a former employee of the Division of Urban Forestry.

Both Mr. White and Mr. Case intend to compete at the regional level in Charleston, South Carolina, in April, 2000. "I expect to be the top finisher from the State of Tennessee and I'm working hard to be ready," White said.

New Addition to Forestry Staff Expected in January

Sometime in January the Urban Forestry program will get a huge boost when it fills the newly created position of "Forestry Inspector". This individual will be charged with the responsibility of protecting the City's valuable resource as contractors develop buildings on city property and around rights-of-way. Why is this so important? Kathy Wolf, Project Director for the University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture, noted in a recent story that 'healthy and well maintained trees send positive messages about the appeal of a district, the quality of products there and the quality of customer service'. The Forestry Inspector will:

- ◆ Review submitted site plans.

- ◆ Issue permits with specific tree protection guidelines.
- ◆ Maintain an inventory of City trees.
- ◆ Conduct on-site inspections.

City Forester, Gene Hyde, said, "we expect a lot from this position, but in turn, we expect a big gain".

*"...healthy and well maintained trees send positive messages about the appeal of a district, the quality of products there, and the quality of customer service",
Kathy Wolf*

City Hires Wolf Tree Company For Pruning and Removal Work

In 1999 the City entered a one-year contract with Wolf Tree Company to furnish the City with a three-man crew with a bucket truck and chipper for \$60.84 per hour. Wolf also furnished a crane truck for \$19.26 per hour. Wolf's tree crew worked from February through October. Listed in the facing column are the results of their work.

In addition, Asplundh Tree Company removed nine trees at a cost of \$5,629 and Roy's tree Service ground out 100 stumps at a cost of \$4,823.



Wolf Tree Company removes a lightning damaged white oak.

Type of Work	No. of Requests	Cost to Solve
Emergency	8	\$4 999
Brush Pickup	8	3 013
Hazard Removal	8	4 939
Prune	17	11 307
Remove	31	23 462
Paving Prune	<u>41</u>	<u>37 642</u>
TOTALS	113	\$85 362

City of Chattanooga

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Were on the web!
www.chattanooga.gov/urbanforestry

Chattanooga Tree Commission Members:

1. David Hopkins, Chairman
2. Cliff Betts
3. Jennie Frankenberg
4. Ann Huckaba
5. Kim McClurkin
6. Leroy Parks
7. Currently vacant

Administrator of Parks, Recreation, Arts,
and Culture: Jerry Mitchell
Superintendent of Parks: John Gunn

The Urban Forestry program operates as a separate division of the Department of Parks, Recreation, Arts and Culture. Its mission is to provide the city with a safe and attractive urban forest. It is guided by a seven-member Tree Advisory Commission appointed on staggered terms by the mayor. The Forestry division draws on other elements within both the Parks Department and Public Works to assist with tree planting, solving service requests, and other situations. The program's main operating budget for F.Y. '99-'00 of \$349,869 is derived strictly from annual appropriations.

This report is prepared annually at the request of the Tree Advisory Commission.



City Council Approves New Urban Forestry Plan

On November 9, 1999 the City Council voted to approve and accept the new management plan as prepared by the firm of ACRT. The original plan was put into place in 1994 and all of the goals from that initial plan have already been achieved. According to ACRT, the new plan, "represents an evaluation and challenges faced by Chattanooga's urban forest, and outlines goals and strategies for the program over the next five years." These goals include:

1. Maintaining adequate resources to address public safety and promptly meet public requests for service. This can be done through:

- a. Prompt removal of hazards.
- b. Quick response to requests for service.
- c. Maintaining a staffing level to meet the community's needs.

2. Budgeting for and implementing a policy of proactive tree maintenance. This can be done through:

- a. Adopting a pruning cycle of eight years for mature trees and four years for young trees.

b. Establish an inventory and database that can be used for making area-wide pruning decisions.

c. Establish the position of Forestry Inspector who will oversee this aspect of the program.

d. Dedicate another 1.2 crews per year solely for rotational pruning.

3. Adopting a set of protocols for storm event recovery. This has already been completed!

4. Integrating all aspects of the area tree cover into a long-term vision for the community. Elements of this include:

- a. Interdepartmental Cooperation
- b. Public outreach and education.
- c. A functional permitting system.
- d. Proper planting.
- e. Invasive plant control

A copy of this plan can be obtained by contacting the Office of Urban Forestry at (423) 697-1315.